

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 6, 2015

Agenda Item: Brucellosis 2015 Work Plan Review and 2016 Annual Work Plan

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 45 minutes

Background

In January 2013, the Commission endorsed elk management recommendations from a citizen working group for application in areas with brucellosis (including the Designated Surveillance Area as described by the Montana Department of Livestock). The Commission also recognized the need for annual work plans based upon these recommendations. The annual work plans describe specific management actions available for implementation. The proposed 2016 annual work plan represents the fourth iteration of annual plans and it builds upon the 2013, 2014, and 2015 plans and the experience gained through implementation. The proposed 2016 plan largely restates the 2015 plan and includes hazing, fencing, lethal removal of elk, habitat modifications, and other efforts to adjust elk distribution at small scales to mitigate the risk of brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle. This proposed work plan also includes the potential for local work groups to propose modifications or additions to the 2016 plan to the Commission at a later date. Proposed changes in the 2016 annual work plan include definitions and clarifications to aid common understanding and implementation across staff, landowners, sportspersons, and other members of the public. Also proposed is allowing up to 25% of hunters for an elk management removal to be identified by the landowner if hunters from the Hunt Roster cannot respond as needed. A supplemental document contains the proposed 2016 annual plan and is available to the public from FWP.

Public Involvement Process & Results

The public comment opportunity for any proposed adoption will run through 5 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8 with any final adoption scheduled for the Oct. 8 Commission meeting. Any final adoption would be available for implementation at that time.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends adoption of the proposed 2016 annual work plan. This plan reflects FWP experience gained from 2013, 2014, and 2015 efforts as well as participation from the statewide working group, landowners, sportspersons, and other members of the public.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed or with adjustment per FWP justifications, public comment and Commission discussion.

Proposed Motion

I move to adopt the proposed 2016 annual work plan for elk management in areas with brucellosis as presented by FWP.